

Additionally, to perfect the Applicant's foreign priority claim, certified priority documents in the English language are submitted herewith, showing filing dates of September 26, 2002, September 24, 2002 and September 24, 2004 for applications JP 2002-280183, JP 2002-277219 and JP 2002-277894, respectively.

Since, in view of the above, Nakashima '756 is eliminated as a reference, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 4-8, 10, 11, 13, 17 and 19 under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakashima '756 is respectfully requested.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakashima '756 in view of Nakashima et al. (US 7,040,734) (Nakashima '734). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Withdrawal of the rejection is in order for at least the reason that Nakashima '756 is eliminated as a reference as discussed above. Moreover, Nakashima '734 is similarly not qualified as prior art. The effective U.S. filing date of September 25, 2003 for Nakashima '734 is later than the effective U.S. filing date of September 23, 2003 for the present application, and its foreign priority date of September 26, 2002 may not be used as the 35 USC § 102(e) date for prior art purposes. In any event, the foreign priority date of September 26, 2002 for Nakashima '734 is not earlier than that accorded by the perfected priority claim of the present application, as discussed above.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakashima '756 in view of Nakashima '734 is respectfully requested.

Claims 9, 18 and 20 are allowed.

Claims 2, 3 and 14-16 are rejected as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested in view of the allowability of claims 1 and 11 as discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: October 9, 2007

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